

COVID-19 COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes June 2, 2020
Approved

DATE: June 2, 2020
TIME: 10:04 a.m. – 12:21 a.m.
PLACE: Zoom online platform

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Gary Clow; Councillors Jill Burridge; Gail MacDonald; Steve Gallant; Derek Smith; Darren MacDougall; Robert Hughes, CAO; Jeremy Crosby, Deputy CAO and Director of Infrastructure; Kim O’Connell, Director of Finance; Wendy Watts, Community and Business Engagement Manager; and Mary McAskill, Recording Clerk

REGRETS: Nil

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

1. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the agenda be approved as circulated.

2. Approval of Minutes – May 26, 2020

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the minutes of May 26, 2020 be approved with one change – remove the names of the employees who are working from the office.

There was some discussion on cleaning of the parks and Robert noted that we engaged a contractor with a pressure washer for the initial cleaning of the parks. Jeremy stated that it is turning out to be more expensive than we thought as it is in the range of \$200 to \$250 per cleaning. The contractor will do the initial cleaning of all the parks, but the onus should also be on the parents of the children to ensure their children have hand sanitizer. Jeremy added after the initial cleaning a disinfectant will be placed on the equipment for a short period time and then it will be pressure washed again. He noted that once we know how often we are required to clean the equipment, we can determine how to go about it. There was some discussion on the extra expenses due to Covid-19 and Jeremy replied that we are keeping a record of all the Covid-19 related expenses. He noted that in regards to funding, he heard the announcement by Prime Minister Trudeau and what they are doing is fast tracking the gas tax fund, but there is no additional funding for municipalities coming at this point. It was noted that Jeremy Pierce is looking after the signage that will be posted at the parks and he will be asked to forward the information he has to date onto Council.

3. Asset Management – Power Point Presentation by Kim O’Connell – Draft Policy and Staff Terms of Reference included in the agenda package)

The draft policy and staff Terms of Reference was included in the agenda package. Kim gave a Power Point Presentation on asset management and took questions from Council. It was noted that

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the policy provides the overall direction of our asset management and it is a file we would like to move forward. If Council is comfortable we can take it to the June meeting, but if Council wants to review it further that is fine as well.

Mayor Ogden felt it could be a big discussion and asked if anyone had any objections to deferring this item until our next Zoom meeting on June 9, and then present it to Council on Wednesday June 10, 2020. Councillor Smith had no problem with the document, but he is okay with deferring it until next Tuesday. The rest of Council felt they would like another week to review it. Mayor Ogden suggested that we could even schedule a special meeting to discuss just this item and everyone agreed that a special meeting would be fine. Mayor Ogden noted that he will discuss with Robert whether or not a special meeting is required and he will get back to Council.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the meeting come go in-camera.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Community Campus Land Acquisition (in camera)

There was a discussion regarding land acquisition and the outcome of the discussion was that the Town will continue with the negotiations to purchase the land.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the meeting come out of camera.

b) Planning Act Public Meetings

Mayor Ogden did contact Minister Fox who informed him that Cabinet will be considering an amendment and this was confirmed by Glenda MacKinnon-Peters who is the director of land use planning. She stated that they are looking at virtual meetings as the solution. Mayor Ogden stated that he spoke to Minister Aylward as well and he is also behind it. He also spoke with Mayor Stewart in Summerside and he felt confident after consulting legal counsel that they will meet the Planning Act. He spoke with Mayor Brown of Charlottetown and he supports virtual meetings and suggested we write a letter to the Ministers involved; however, Mayor Ogden felt we should wait for a week or so because the province is working on an amendment. He is hopeful the issue will be solved and so the Town can move forward with the two public meetings that we need to have. Glenda MacKinnon-Peters is to contact Mayor Ogden when the amendment goes forward and he in turn will let everyone know.

Robert noted that it was in the news last week that they are telling legislation to enable Cabinet and/or Ministers to override legislation during an emergency. Robert added that staff is working on a plan B in the event that this does not go through.

5. Operational Update

a) Infrastructure Funding

Mayor Ogden noted that the announcement that was made on June 1, 2020 was that the federal government is advancing the gas tax funding in one lump sum rather than two installments. Robert added that it doesn't really affect us, as it is just a timing issue. We budget

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for it and we spend the money as we need to. The timing just determines if we need short term borrowing or not. Robert stated that he called the director in the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy because we have an application in for an arena for the Canada Games (which we didn't get), and we discussed needing to submit a new application to reflect that we will not be building a Canada Games facility. During the budget discussion we decided to put some of the longer term water and sewer projects on hold so we could direct some of our infrastructure money on the community campus and other Town needs. We hadn't heard back for a while on a number of the applications we submitted, and he wanted to know what was happening with infrastructure and if we could modify our applications to reflect what we talked about in the budget. The federal government is saying that they are not putting more money in but they are looking to advance money that they have in the long term program, so there may be more money coming out to stimulate the economy. The director told him that they would definitely go back and ask for revised submissions. We can now go back and take some of the water and sewer applications out and submit some applications for the community campus. We are also going to put something in for a rink arena project. Robert noted that this was discussed on the management call, and we are going to start putting some numbers together of what we might submit in the first phase of the campus- in order to be ready when they start looking for applications again.

Councillor Burrridge noted that as far as the rink is concerned it needs to be more than Council looking for funding. She felt that we need to work with the community to start fundraising - in addition to what Robert is working on for funding. Councillor MacDougall agreed that we need other voices other than our own to move this forward. Mayor Ogden agreed that having the community as a big part of the project is important.

Robert stated that he has been waiting for the province to bring down the budget to see if the money we have been lobbying for will be available to municipalities. When we did our budget, we committed to our residents that we would bring them the options for the community campus. It will be slow, medium, and high growth scenarios with the tax implications. Robert added that he would suggest we include a conversation of will the community be willing to step up and take on part of the responsibility which would keep the tax rate down. We can include that in our consultation with residents. We can try to get some sense of how the community feels, but to also start the conversation with residents to see if they would agree to help us out. Robert added that the budget should be down by the end of June and then we can start the conversation on when to consult with the public soon after that.

b) CFPEI Funding

For information purposes. Community Foundation of PEI and the United Way have been granted funding from the federal government to help the community groups respond to Covid related issues. The funds are available up until next February or March of 2021 and staff is looking into it to see if there is any opportunity for the Town to run some type of a program.

c) Business Resumption

Robert stated that the only change we are proposing is opening the office on June 15. He noted that we are still looking into the requirements for the day camps so we are not ready to give an

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answer on that yet. He would suggest we open on the office June 15, but we are not proposing that everyone come back at the same time. We could have enough people in the office so if a resident needs to access the office there will be someone available to help them, but we propose to still encourage some people to work at home where possible to respect the Chief Health Officer's advice.

Robert would also suggest that we wrap up the Zoom meetings up by the end of June and resume our regular committee and Council meetings in July. We are not sure yet if we will be able to have physical meetings; we may still need to use Zoom. He would also recommend, as is typical of summer meetings, that we just schedule one meeting in the summer. He added that we will come back on the day camp issue once we hear from the Public Health Officer and he hopes to have the answer in time for next week's call.

Deputy Mayor Clow felt that it was time to get everyone working back at the office the same as every other municipality. There was some discussion and some felt that because things are opening up we should too using safe practices. Mayor Ogden noted that he spoke with Mayor Stewart of Summerside and they are not back to work and they do not have any specific plans yet to when they will be back to work. Robert added that they have since announced June 15, but that doesn't infer everyone will be back at the office on that date, and the province has many people still working from home for the foreseeable future under the guidance of the Chief Public Health Officer.

Mayor Ogden noted that we are following the model of Summerside which he felt was a good model. Mayor Stewart felt that they could provide the services with the necessary people in the office. Another thing that is important is what Cornwall is doing and they will not be open before June 15 at the earliest.

Councillor Burrige felt that Robert's plan is absolutely fine. She noted that she has received more applause of staff and how they are responding to our residents, and doesn't believe service levels are down at all. Another consideration we have to think about is if someone is asked to go back to work and has no place to take their children. Councillor Burrige felt that we need to be somewhat flexible.

Councillor Smith stated that he has three points to make. We all know that kids pull on our heart strings, but Council is not responsible for child care. He wanted to know if the staff was asked to come back to work as there may be some who are willing to come back to the Town Centre. In the future, if we run out of space in the Town Centre – can we implement a program of working from home?

Mayor Ogden asked if we could set up office space in the new emergency services building and Robert replied that we have meeting rooms in the building, but to make them into offices would be quite a fit-up. Mayor Ogden stated that it would lend itself to social distancing with

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partitions that don't cost that much, and it is just another option if people need a place to work because they can't practice social distancing at the current office.

Mayor Ogden felt that we have a good middle ground and we have taken a reasonable approach. Administratively he looks to Robert because he is accountable for our services to the residents. In order to make him accountable, we also have to give him the authority to decide how to deliver the services.

Jeremy stated that the way the office is set up we are in a unique position where almost everyone has their own office. To keep socially distant should not be a problem as long as we make sure that staff does not mingle in the hallways. However, if some people can still work from home it is a viable option. Speaking for himself, Jeremy noted that he has been busier at home than he was at the office.

Councillor Gallant noted that his perspective is that some people do want to get back to work and get out of the house and he will leave it up to Robert and Jeremy. Robert stated that he has asked the managers to consult with their staff to see who does want to be at the office and what they can do there and what they can do at home. We have to keep in mind that the reason Dr. Morrison is still recommending that people work from home is because if there is community spread and if everyone is working out of the office, and everyone comes down with it there will be no one left to provide service to the residents. Having some physical distancing and having some people work from home is an important strategy to ensure we can provide services in an emergency. Mayor Ogden agreed that was a very important point.

Councillor MacDonald noted that Borden is opening on June 8 and a lot of the others are open now, and Jeremy did indicate that most of our employees do have their own office, so social distancing should not be an issue. She added that she doesn't think we should ask employees if they want to go back to work. However, if they have a good reason why they can't go back such as no child care availability, or if someone is truly afraid of Covid-19 she would understand. Councillor MacDonald noted that she was glad that we do have a date of June 15 for opening the office so residents are able to access it. She asked Robert if the plan is for the majority of people to go back to the office and Robert replied the idea is to staff the office to the amount required to make sure people get what they need, but also to let people continue to work from home, and encourage people to continue to work from home where possible to respect Dr. Morrison's orders. We want to make sure that we don't end up with everyone being off work at the same time if there is community spread.

Mayor Ogden noted that there is a need for a contingency backup plan in the event of a community spread. If people get sick, we need to have an adequate backup plan and keep continuity of service.

d) Insurance Tender

Robert noted that we go out for tender for insurance every four years and our insurance is due to expire in August, so Kim has started work on an RFP. She spoke to both companies who deal

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with municipal insurance, but when she spoke to Cooke Insurance (our insurance is currently through Hyndman and Company) they indicated that if we were to put out an RFP during this time, it would be significantly higher than what we are currently paying. Robert asked Kim to speak with our current provider to see if we can extend our policy for a year and if so what would be the cost. Robert noted that he doesn't have their reply back yet. We will bring the information back once we receive it.

Councillor Smith felt it might be best to check online first, but Robert noted that there are only two companies that will do insurance for municipalities because of the different types of insurance we need which are large and varied. It is very specialized and it is not something we could get a quote for online.

6. Business Resumption Plan

a) Office Opening

Covered earlier in the meeting

7. Records Management Bylaw (updated draft bylaw included in agenda package as well as an email from last week)

Last week Robert sent a copy of the Records Management Bylaw and the Provincial Model Bylaw and a spreadsheet that shows them combined. The yellow highlighted sections are mandated by legislation. Robert noted that we have had a records management system for about 10 years now and that is why he wants to blend ours with the province.

After some discussion Council felt they would like more time to review the information and it was agreed that this item be deferred until the special meeting later in the week, or the next regular Tuesday meeting.

8. FCM PACE Application (draft FCM application and draft MOU included in the agenda package)

Robert noted that we are participating with other municipalities and FCM has given very positive feedback on the application. What we need from Council is a resolution of approval at the June Council meeting. Robert stated that we could defer it until next Tuesday, and then bring it to Council on Wednesday, but it needs to be approved this month. Mayor Ogden noted that we will be having a special meeting this week so we could either discuss it at the special meeting, we could discuss it at the next regular Tuesday meeting, or we could approve it.

Mayor Ogden polled everyone. Deputy Mayor Clow wanted to defer it to the special meeting to allow him time to read it completely before he votes on it at Council. Councillor MacDougall stated that he has a pretty good 'handle' on it and would be ready to vote. Councillor MacDonald would like to defer it to the special meeting. Councillor Gallant would also like to defer it to the special meeting. Councillor Smith stated that he is 100 percent behind this file and he would be ready to vote. Councillor Burrridge noted that her problem with this originally was the Town having to act as banker, but with FCM coming in on the project and filling that role she is for it.

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Mayor Ogden took a vote and there were three ready to vote now – Councillor MacDougall; Councillor Smith and Councillor Burrige. Three against were Deputy Mayor Clow; Councillor MacDonald, and Councillor Gallant.

Mayor Ogden stated that in the interest of Council solidarity, he asked that we defer and revisit this issue at our special meeting later this week. He asked Councillor to be in a position to either approve or reject it because we will need a quick decision turn around. If required, he will break the tie.

Councillor MacDonald noted that she has plans for Thursday afternoon and asked if the meeting could be held at 10:00 a.m. Jeremy noted that he and Robert will be in another meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday. Wendy noted that there are a number of previously booked Zoom meetings, so we will have to work around what is available.

Mayor Ogden felt it was important that we get the message out today that the office will be opening on June 15, 2020 and any other information that needs to be communicated to residents.

Councillor Gallant suggested that we put our Stratford graduates pictures with their name on our sign board and he asked how others felt about it. Although some thought it was a good idea, Wendy explained we have a policy of what content is allowed on our sign board and part of that comes from the provincial regulations that we have to follow. She noted that we do have a message planned for all graduates. Jeremy added that our sign board struggles with high resolution graphics such as pictures.

Robert asked Councillor Gallant to email him his idea and he will have a look to see what the possibilities might be. Wendy felt that if Mayor Ogden did a personal video to wish the graduates all the best it would be quite meaningful. Mayor Ogden will get Wendy's advice on how to structure the video.

9. Council Remuneration and Allowances Commission (draft Terms of Reference and Charlottetown Report attached)

Deferred

10. Town Council Resolution Items - Deferred

- a) Fire Company Lease
- b) PACE Application Approval
- c) Street Names
- d) Utility Loan Renewal
- e) Records Management Bylaw
- f) Asset Management Policy

11. Covid-19 Operational Status Report

Deferred

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12. Covid-19 Contingency Fund

Deferred

13. Communications to Residents

Deferred

14. Council Inquiries

Deferred

15. Other Business

16. Date of Next Meeting

To be determined

17. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m. and will reconvene later this week - date and time to be determined.